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STRAIN 2

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Tony Isabella, comics critic

"Loads of sexy action. This one is a definite 'mature' manga."

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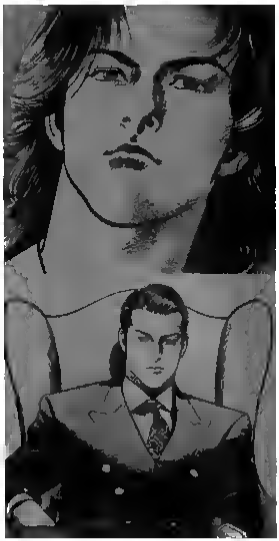

STRAIN

STORY BY BURONSON, ART BY RYOICHI IKEGAMI

PULP GRAPHIC NOVEL

vol. 2

STORY BY
BURONSON
ART BY
RYOICHI IKEGAMI

ENGLISH ADAPTATION BY
YUJI ONIKI

This volume contains the STRAIN installments from PULP Vol. 2, No. 8 through Vol. 3, No. 3 in their entirety.

Touch-Up Art & Lettering/Cate
Cover Design/Izumi Evers
Editor/Annette Roman

Director of Sales & Marketing/Oliver Chin
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Editor-in-Chief/Satoru Fujii
Publisher/Seiji Horibuchi

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Printed in Canada

Published by Viz Communications, Inc.
P.O. Box 77010 San Francisco, CA 94107

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2
First printing, June 1999
Second printing, March 2000

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j-pop.com www.j-pop.com
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STRAIN VOL. 1
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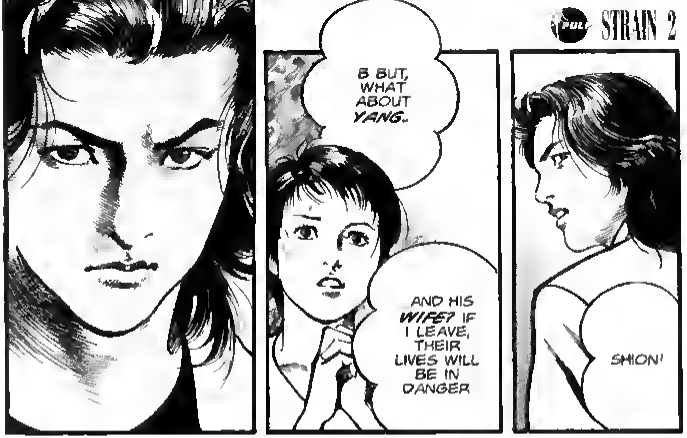
CHAPTER ONE
JAPANESE

Then Sh-shion is
HAVE YOU TOLD HER?
NO
YOUVE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE IF YOU WANT HER TO LIVE
YOU CANT TAKE ON THE ENTIRE ORGANI ZATION


& BUT, WHAT ABOUT YANG..
AND HIS WIFE? IF I LEAVE, THEIR LIVES WILL BE IN DANGER
SHION!

BRRR

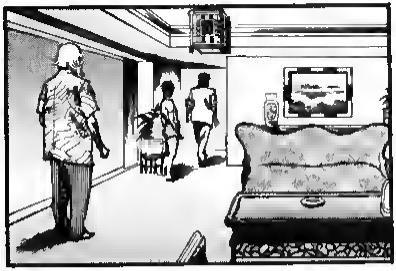
NOD
CAN YOU DO ME A FAVOR, SAI?
YES?
YOU KNOW KYOKO, RIGHT?
SHE'LL LET HER STAY?
FWAP
THIS PLACE ISN'T SAFE ANY MORE TAKE SHION TO KYOKO
JUST TELL HER THIS...

...THAT I'M NO LONGER MAYO! AND THAT I'M GOING BACK TO MY JAPANESE NAME!

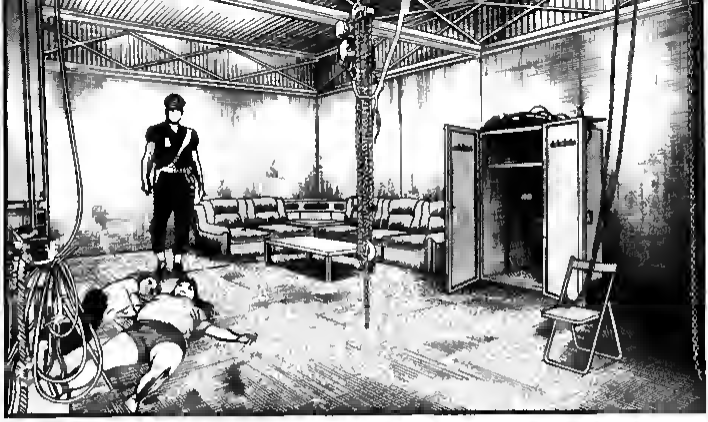
J-JAPANESE!?
MAYO!
SHE'LL TAKE HER IN
S-SO YOU'RE GOING, MAYO?
...
FAP

M-MAYO..

MAYO..

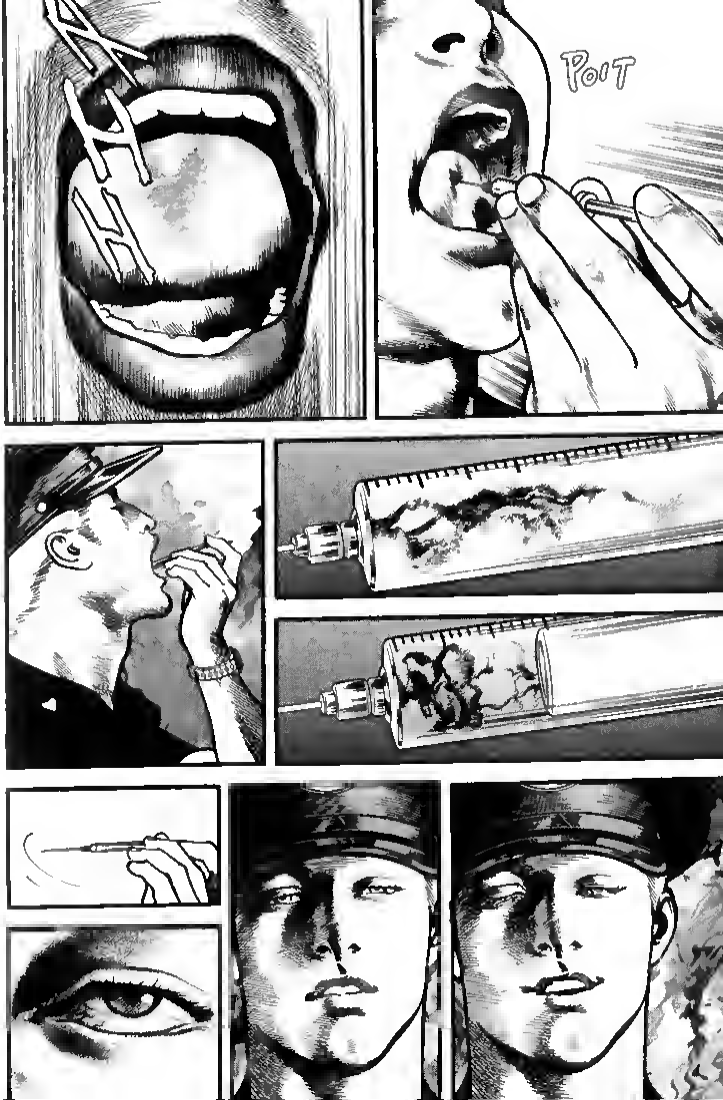


FU
MP



P-PLEASE TAKE HER TO THE HOSPITAL

I-IT WON'T WORK. MAYO AND ME AREN'T THAT TIGHT HE WON'T COME.


POIT

KRESH
...
FWIP
FWIP
FWAP

ZZZIPP
WHEN I THINK ABOUT HIM COMING HERE SOON I GET SO TURNED ON...

ALL RIGHT, LET'S HEAR IT
WANT SOME COFFEE?
E EXCUSE ME, BUT...
HOW DO YOU KNOW MAYO?
HUH?
HA
HA HA HA... ALL OF A SUDDEN YOU'RE A WOMAN..
SO YOUVE GOT A THING FOR MAYO

YOU HAVEN'T SLEPT WITH HIM YET, THOUGH, RIGHT?
snapp
MAYO AND I HAVE BEEN INVOLVED FROM TIME TO TIME...
THE SEX WAS IN-CREDIBLE!
!
JEALOUS, KIDDO?
JUST KIDDING! GEEZ!
YOU'RE SO CUTE, I COULDN'T HELP TEASING YOU.
C'MON, I WAS JUST JOKING

Fooo
I HAVE A MESSAGE FOR YOU FROM MAYO
WHAT'S HE HAVE TO SAY?
HE SAYS HE'S NO LONGER MAYO. HE'S GOING BACK TO HIS JAPANESE NAME
JAPANESE?
AND HE SAID ONCE YOU HEAR THAT, YOU'LL TAKE THE GIRL IN
...
WHO IS SHE?
FAPP

SHE'S...
...THE DAUGHTER OF SHUNICHIRO KUSAKA, HEAD OF KUSAKA!
M MY FATHER
NOW I GET IT...
MAYO'S PART OF THE KUSAKA "STRAIN"!
HIS JAPANESE NAME IS SHINGO KUSAKA!

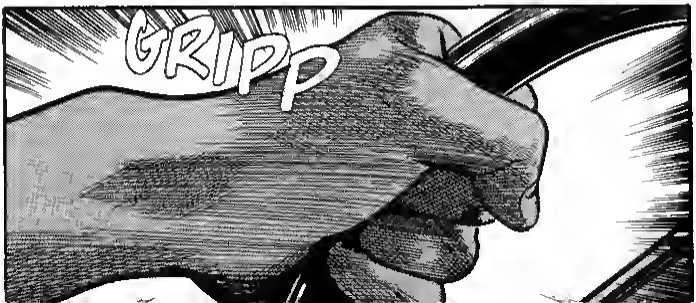
WHAT !?

Sh-shingo Kusaka
Shingo Kusaka is the HALF-BROTHER of Shunichiro Kusaka!
THAT MEANS MAYO AND I ARE

KL ANGKANG
– Three years ago –
IT'S ALL A MISTAKE! I DIDN'T PUT ANY DRUGS IN MY BAG!
CONTACT KUSAKA IN JAPAN MY BROTHER WILL TAKE CARE OF EVERYTHING!
WE ALREADY DID
THE ANSWER WAS NO THEY DON'T WANT ANYTHING TO DO WITH YOU
WHAT !?
YOU STILL DON'T GET IT, DO YOU?
YOU'VE BEEN FRAMED, BUDDY!

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT...
H HOW COULD HE...?

NOT JUST ME, BUT EVEN HIS OWN DAUGHTER.


GRIPP

WHERE DOES ANGEL LIVE?

BLAM
BLAM

AIEE!
WHAT THE HELL! M-MY HOUSE!?
YES SIR IT JUST LIT UP!
HUH?
GO TAKE ANOTHER LOOK. I CAN'T BELIEVE IT JUST BURNT DOWN LIKE SOME HAYSTACK!
YES SIR!

COULD ME HAVE..?
VIP!
WHAT IS IT NOW!?

CHAK
M
MAYO..

FROM THIS DAY ON I'M NO DIFFERENT FROM YOU.
NOTHING WILL STOP ME!

IN THE BACK STREETS OF MALAYSIA, BLOOD RUNS THICK, BUT NOT THICKER THAN WATER....

PULP GRAPHIC NOVELS—COMPILING THE HOTTEST MANGA FROM THE PAGES OF VIZ COMICS' REVOLUTIONARY MANGA MAGAZINE FOR GROWNUPS!

Someone wanted Shingo "Mayu" Kusaka dead, so they planted drugs on him, and under Malaysian law, he was sentenced to death. But he escaped.

Someone wanted teenage prostitute Shion dead, so they ordered Shingo, now a ruthless assassin, to do the dirty work. But he refused.

Since Shingo took Shion under his wing, his heart of ice has begun to melt. His sometime lover, Kyoko, has taken a shine to the plucky girl as well. Only their loyal friend, Old Man Sai, knows that Shion is actually Shingo's niece.

Someone still wants Shingo dead, so a sado-masochistic cop called Angel has been hired to do the job. And he's more than eager to perform....

Buronson is the acclaimed author of the political crime thriller Sanctuary *and the post-apocalyptic action-adventure saga* Fist of the North Star.

Ryoichi Ikegami is the world-renowned artist whose gritty, realistic, and erotic artwork graces the pages of Sanctuary, Crying Freeman, Mai the Psychic Girl, *and* Samurai Crusader. *He was awarded a coveted Ink Pot Award at the 1996 San Diego Comic Con.*

$15.95 USA/$23.95 CAN

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PUBLISHED BY VIZ

VOL. 2
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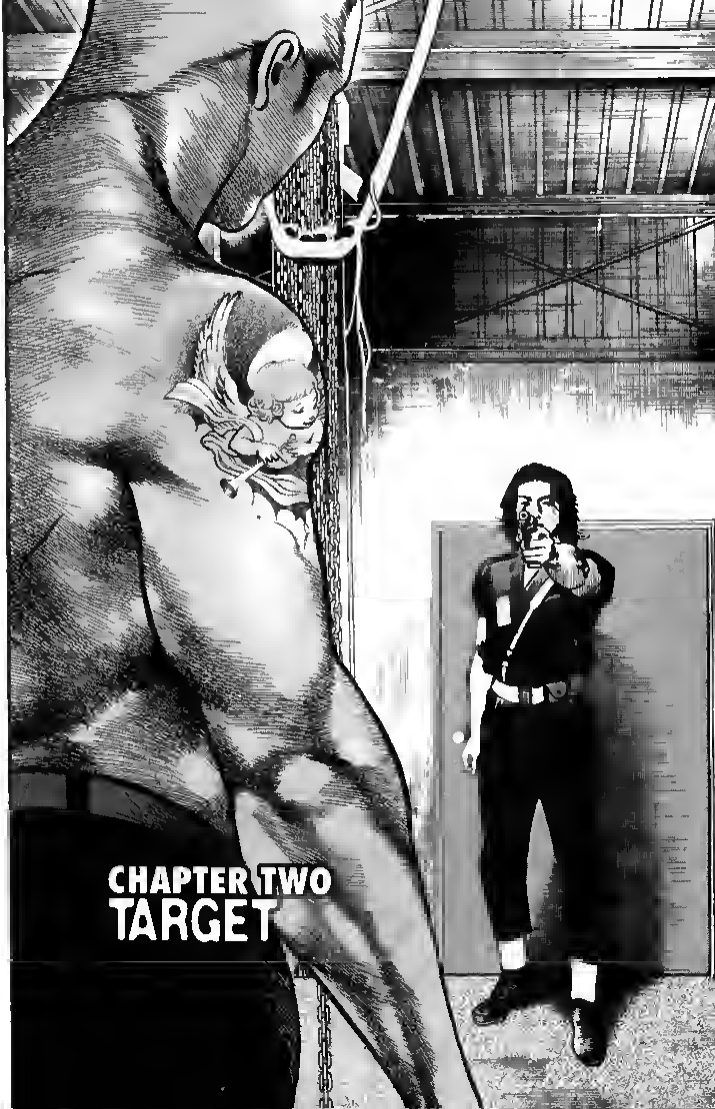
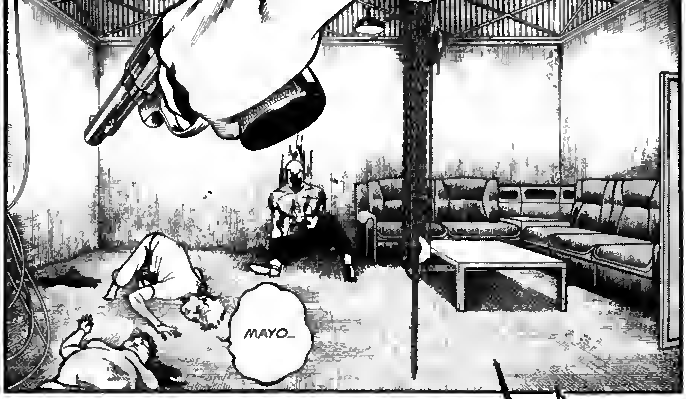
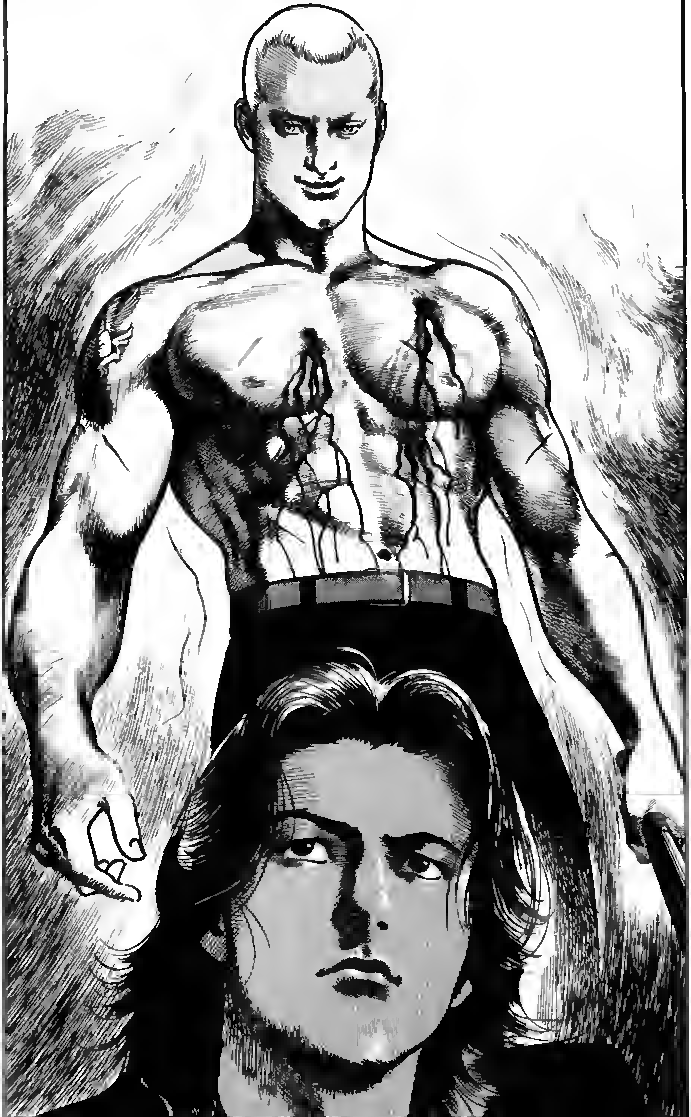

CHAPTER TWO
TARGET

NO BACK UP FOR YOU...
EVERY COP IN TOWN IS HEADING TO YOUR HOUSE
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM

BLAM
SLUMP

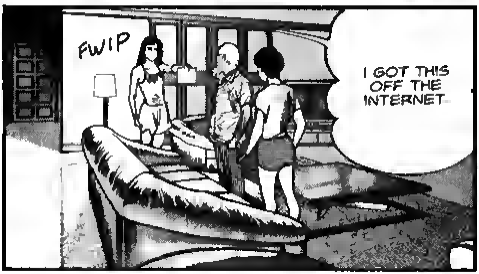

MAYO...

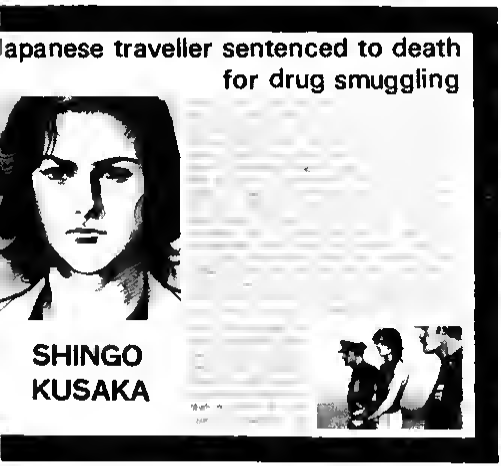
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
YEAH. BUT MY OLD LADY IS.



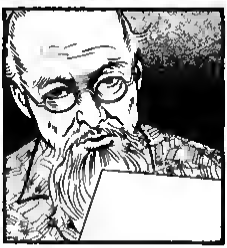
M MY UNCLE...!

THAT'S RIGHT. YOU'RE MAYO'S NIECE


FWIP
I GOT THIS OFF THE INTERNET


Japanese traveller sentenced to death for drug smuggling
SHINGO KUSAKA

FWIP



MAYO WAS ALREADY A TARGET THREE YEARS AGO.
BRRR
HEY— YOU ALL RIGHT?
M MAYO IS
KR
AK
THUD
M MAYO...

UNHH...

HEH HEH HEH...
STUP
SPLTCH
FEELS GREAT. MY SKULL IS TINGLING.
SNF
SNG

KNOW WHAT I MEAN?
WELL!? DO YA!?
TOK

AARGH
VIP
TUGG
DON'T WORRY...
I WOULDN'T DREAM OF HURTING THAT PRETTY LITTLE FACE OF YOURS.
I'VE BEEN WAITING SO LONG FOR THIS THAT..
...I LOST MY PATIENCE HAD TO KILL SOME TIME WITH YANG...

URGH...
HARRGH
BLAM
BLAM
SKREEE
YANG!

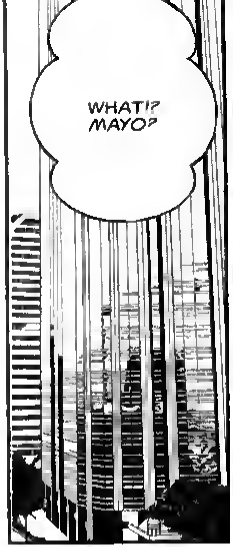
TUG
MAYO...
SQUEE
KRNCH

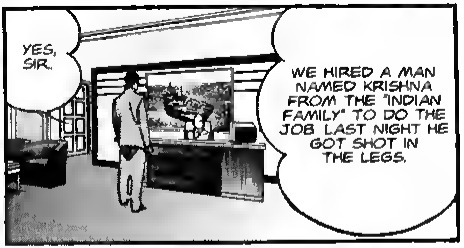
UNGH!

BL
AM
nngh..
THOK

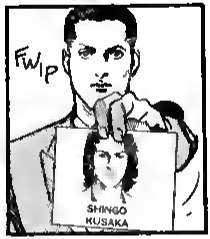
UNGH!
THE GUN!
RRG!
BLAM

SPLUTCH


WHAT!? MAYO?


YES, SIR.
WE HIRED A MAN NAMED KRISHNA FROM THE "INDIAN FAMILY" TO DO THE JOB. LAST NIGHT HE GOT SHOT IN THE LEGS.

ACCORDING TO HIM, THE GUY WHO DID IT WAS NAMED MAYO


FWIP
SHINGO KUSAKA

SHINGO KUSAKA
SAME GUY...

...

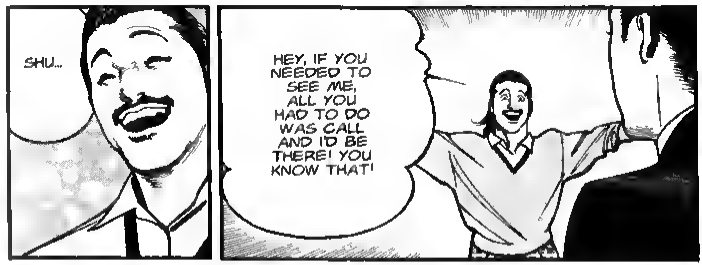
AND THAT ASSASSIN ANGEL WAS JUST FATALLY SHOT

SO THAT WASN'T A GHOST...

Japan
WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE FROM MALAYSIA, SIR?
I'VE GOT SOME BUSINESS TO TAKE CARE OF.

HOW WAS YOUR GAME, SIR?
TAP
TAP
HOW DID YOU SCORE, SIR?
BLINK
THRAK
KR
YOU IDIOTS!
THIS COURSE STINKS!
IF I CAN'T GET A CLEAR SHOT DOWN THIS FAIRWAY...
I'LL PLOUGH THIS COURSE UNDER!
DIRTBAGS!
SPURT

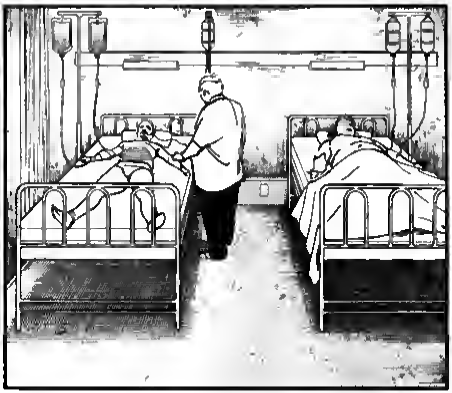
MUROTO

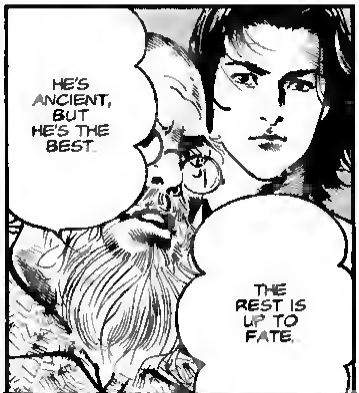

SHU...
HEY, IF YOU NEEDED TO SEE ME, ALL YOU HAD TO DO WAS CALL AND I'D BE THERE! YOU KNOW THAT!

THAT'S KUSAKA
YEAH. I DON'T KNOW WHAT WENT DOWN WITH THEM...
...BUT I'VE HEARD MUROTO SAY HE'D WASTE HIS *OWN* PARENTS FOR KUSAKA.

IVE GOT A JOB FOR YOU..

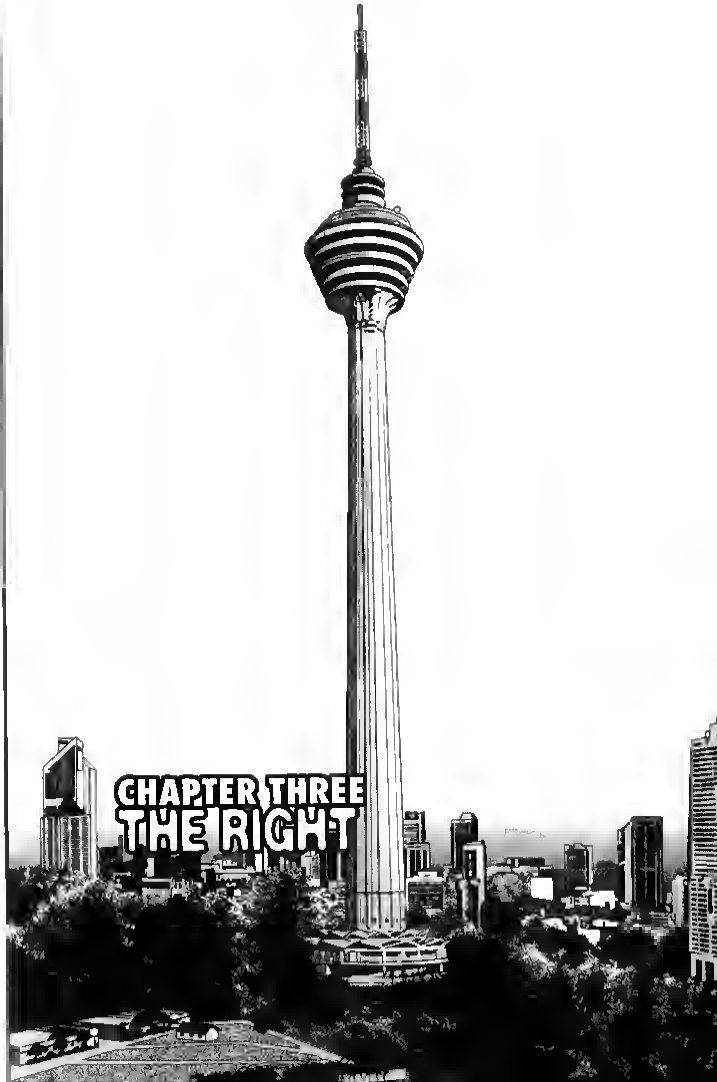
Malaysia




HE'S ANCIENT, BUT HE'S THE BEST.
THE REST IS UP TO FATE.

Kuala Lumpur Airport
DAMN HOT HERE

STRAIN
Jinchiseans
#Manga-Sketchbook@Dalnet


CHAPTER THREE
THE RIGHT

-MY FATHER...?
YOUR MOTHER... YOU... AND--

--THREE YEARS AGO -- ME HE WANTS US DEAD

-BUT WHY?

THE ABANDONED CAN NEVER UNDERSTAND WHY THEY'VE BEEN TOSSED ASIDE.
THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF PEOPLE WHO CUT OFF THEIR "STRAIN"...
THE INCREDIBLY CHARISMATIC "KING" OR THE WEAKEST COWARD.

— Japan —
SO YOU'RE STILL ALIVE, SHINGO
THE SAME BLOOD FLOWS IN OUR VEINS..
...THE BLOOD THAT MAKES YOU AN HEIR TO THE THRONE...

Kusaka, Malaysia
THE PLANE'S RIGHT ON SCHEDULE MAKE SURE YOU DON'T MISS YOUR FLIGHT
CHAK!
IT'S ME, MUROTA.

DIDN'T TOSHI TELL YOU GUYS I WAS ON MY WAY?
TH-THAT'S RIGHT
GRMP
SO THIS IS A SAMPLE OF THOSE PORN FLICK BABES THEY SEND OVER FOR FUN AND GAMES?
TUG
OUCH!
W-WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING!?
YOU CAN'T HURT ME! I'M AN ACTRESS!
AN "ACTRESS," HUH!?
ALLS YOU DO IS SPREAD YOUR LEGS FOR YOUR CUSTOMERS' DICKS!!

SPLUTCH
YOU'RE WHAT WE CALL "TOILET GIRLS"!
WHUMP
AHHH!
SO WHAT'S THE SCOOP ON THIS ORGANIZATION THAT SCREWED UP THE HIT?
I CAN'T WAIT TO MEET 'EM.

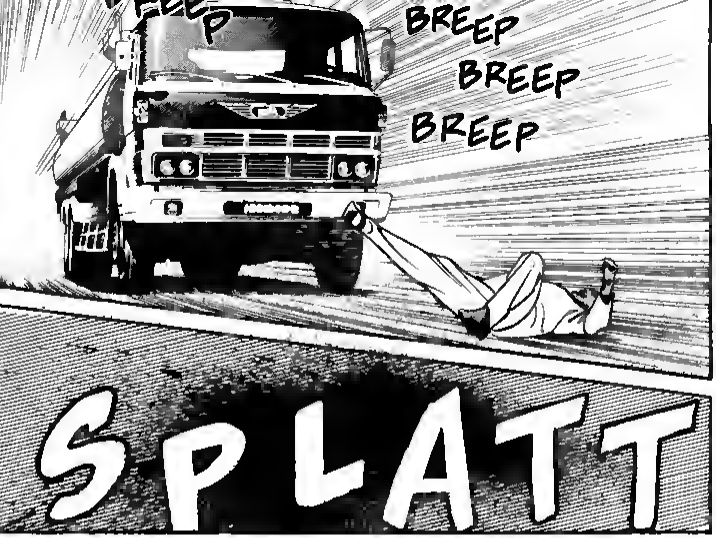
AROMA
THOSE GUYS ?
THE ONE WITH THE BROKEN LEGS IS KRISHNA, THEIR NUMBER TWO GUY THE OTHER MAN IS THE BOSS, MUKHERJEE
THE TWO-FOR-ONE SPECIAL GUESS ! LUCKED OUT.

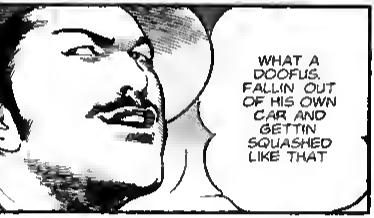
HEY. HOW'S IT GOING?
HUH? A JAPANESE?
FROM KUSAKA?
FWAP

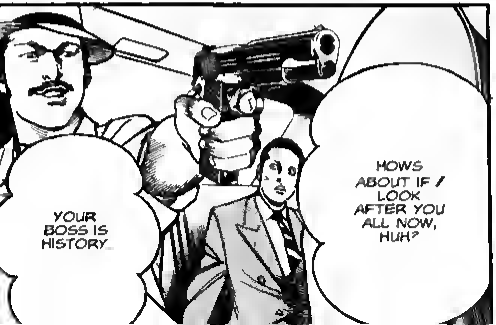
SHF
KRE
K

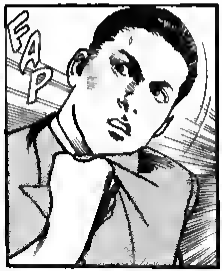
KRESH
TELL 'EM IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR NO BIG DEAL.
READY TA TAKE OFF?

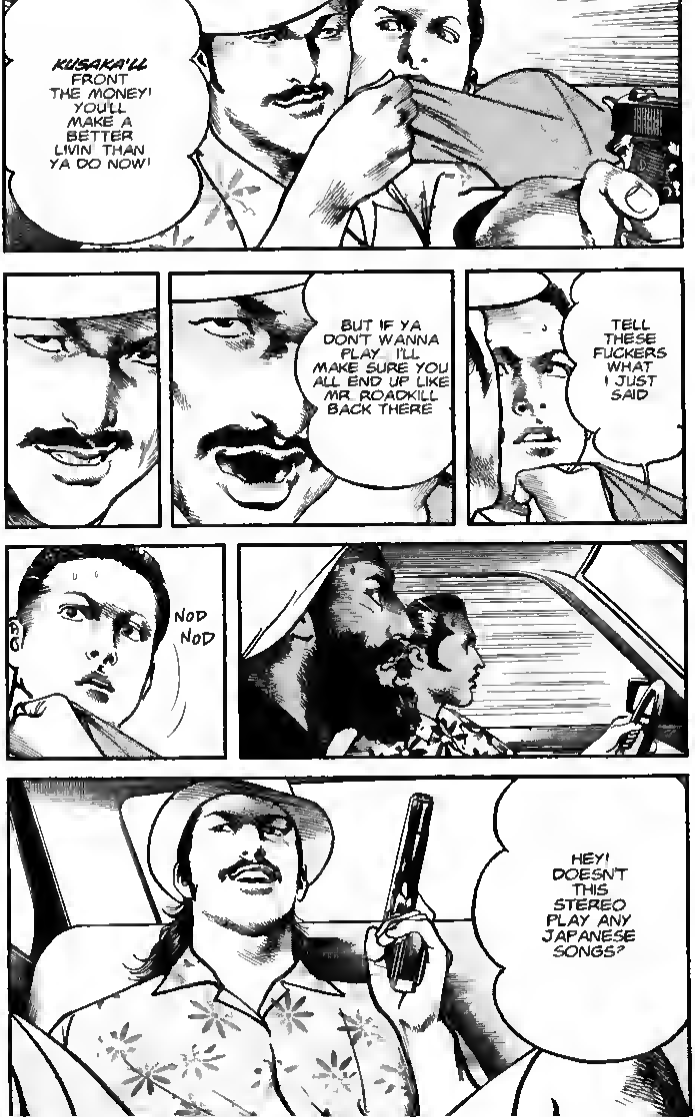
CHAK
WHUMP
W WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?

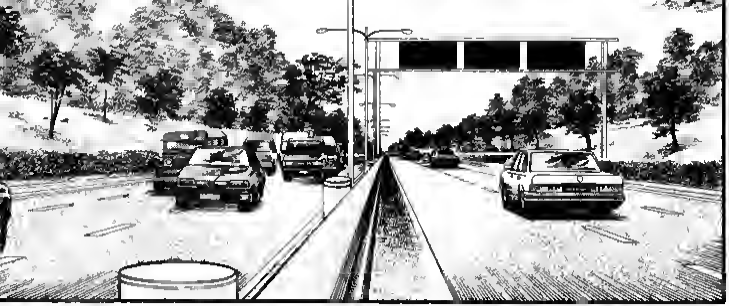

BREEP
BREEP
BREEP
SPLATT

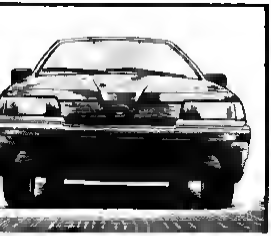

WHAT A DOOFUS. FALLIN OUT OF HIS OWN CAR AND GETTIN SQUASHED LIKE THAT


YOUR BOSS IS HISTORY
HOWS ABOUT IF I LOOK AFTER YOU ALL NOW, HUH?


FAP


KUSAKA'LL FRONT THE MONEY! YOU'LL MAKE A BETTER LIVIN THAN YA DO NOW!
BUT IF YA DON'T WANNA PLAY I'LL MAKE SURE YOU ALL END UP LIKE MR ROADKILL BACK THERE
TELL THESE FUCKERS WHAT I JUST SAID
NOD NOD
HEY! DOESN'T THIS STEREO PLAY ANY JAPANESE SONGS?

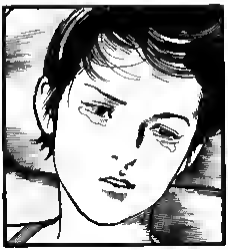


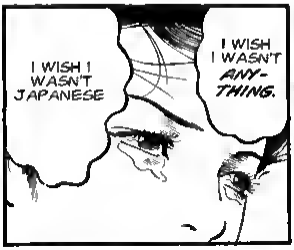


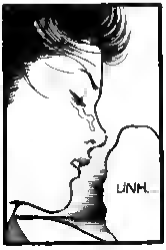
YOU ALL RIGHT?

I JUST...

I JUST DON'T CARE ANYMORE

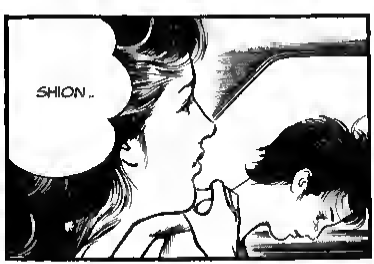



I WISH I WASN'T JAPANESE
I WISH I WASN'T ANY-THING.


UNH...

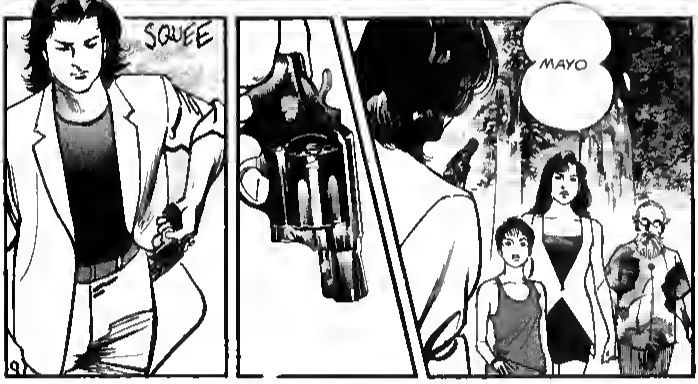
I WISH I COULDVE JUST STAYED IN THE DARK.

..AND COULD'VE MET MAYO AND..


SHION..

SCREECH
TIME TO GET OUT, SHION.
HUH?

W-WHAT...
ARE WE DOING HERE?

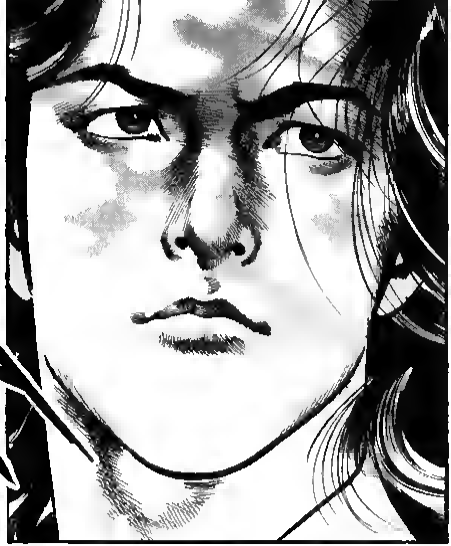

SQUEE
MAYO

SHA

THIS GUN IS YOURS NOW...
I'M GOING TO TEACH YOU HOW TO USE IT.
SQUEE
THE BATTLE IS ABOUT TO BEGIN..
OUR BATTLE
SHA
CHAK

WE WON'T DIE BEFORE WE MEET HIM FACE TO FACE!

BLAM
BLAM



M
MAYO

KYOKO..

AFTER THAT YOU CAN TAKE WHATEVER YOU WANT FROM KUSAKA.

MAYO..

THIS IS THE BEST JOINT IN KUALA LUMPUR

WHERE'S KYOKO?
SHE'S FINALLY IN, SIR

WELCOME

HUH!?

WELL, LOOKIE HERE WHAT A NICE SURPRISE!
KYOKO! WHAT'S A NICE BITCH LIKE YOU DOIN IN A PLACE LIKE THIS?
M-MUROTA..
NOW THAT AIN'T NO WAY TO WELCOME YOUR FIRST MAN, IS IT?
SQUEEZE

STRAIN
Jinchiseans
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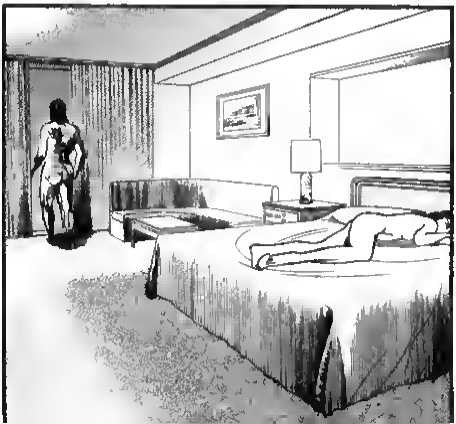
CHAPTER FOUR
THE DEAL

HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF



SO YOUVE GOT YOURSELF A MAN HUH?
urk!
CHIK
SOMEONE YOU WANNA SPREAD YOUR LEGS FOR.
SO WHAT IF I DO?
AWW, AINT THAT SWEET
FWP
AT LEAST YA HAVENT SUNK SO LOW THAT YOURE SELLIN IT.
FWOO

YOU'RE HERE WITH MR MURAI FROM KUSAKA. WHAT ARE YOU UP TO?

I GOTTA WHACK SOME ONE

IF YA EVER GET BORED WITH THE KID, COME BACK TO ME. I'LL TREAT YA RIGHT.

THE ONE AND ONLY KUSAKA WILL LOOK AFTER YOU.

YOU SEEM VERY BUSY THESE DAYS, UNCLE
WE LOOKED INTO YOUR REQUEST
FWAP
TO PUT IT SIMPLY_

THREE YEARS AGO, THE HEAD AND ERSTWHILE HEIR OF KUSAKA, YOSUKE KUSAKA DISAPPEARED SOON AFTER ANNOUNCING HIS ABRUPT RETIREMENT
THE STORY BEHIND THAT TURN OF EVENTS REMAINS A MYSTERY.
A CONTROVERSY ENSUED OVER WHO WOULD SUCCEED KUSAKA.
THE CORPORATION'S MAIN BANK, SUMIWA, BOUGHT OFF SEVERAL BOARD DIRECTORS TO DETHRONE THE ELDER BROTHER, SHUNICHIRO, AND REPLACE HIM WITH THE YOUNGER, SHINGO

THE UPPER ECHELONS AT THE SUMIWA BANK BELIEVED THAT THE OLDER BROTHER – WHO WAS SAID TO BE JUST AS, IF NOT MORE, TALENTED AND EXTREME IN TEMPERAMENT THAN HIS FATHER – WOULD BE A LIABILITY...
...WHEREAS THEY BELIEVED THEY COULD MANIPULATE THE ARTISTIC YOUNGER BROTHER, SHINGO...

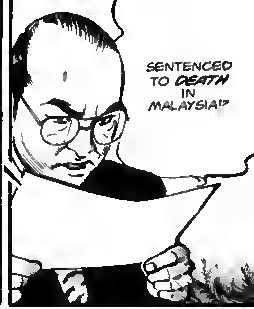
S SO ...?
EVERY COUNTRY HAS ITS "STRAIN," UNCLE...

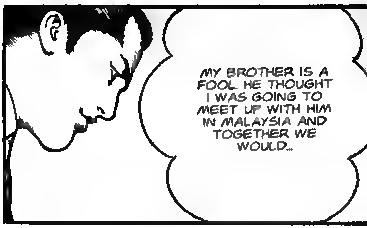
Japan

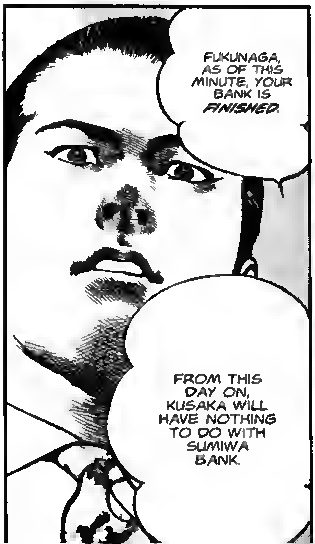
HA HA HA
HA HA
SHHH
TMP
SO YOU THINK YOU'VE GOTTEN RID OF ME..
SHUNICHIRO..
PRESIDENT FUKUNAGA— I HAVE SOMETHING TO SHOW YOU!
FAP
Japanese traveller sentenced to death for drug smuggling
SHINICHI KUSAKA

Japanese traveller sentenced to de
for drug smugg

SHINGO KUSAKA







AND THE LOT OF YOU ARE LEAVING KUSAKA AS WELL.
B-BUT...
SIR...
YOU OLD GEEZERS...
THE ONLY WAY TO GET RID OF ME IS TO KILL ME!
SO SHINGO SURVIVED...
WHOOSH
I'M NOT AFRAID OF MY OWN BLOOD!

BUT HE HAS TO GO!

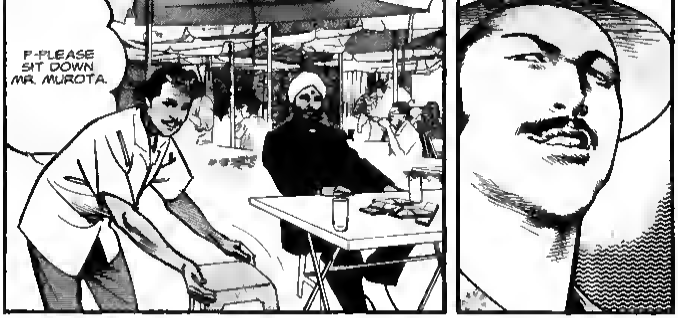
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM

SO WHAT IS...
...MY FATHER LIKE?
HE'S INCREDIBLY POWERFUL.
I USED TO ADMIRE HIS STRENGTH.
CHAK
CHAK!
...
SHAA!

BLAM
KRAK

The same strength flows in your veins...

M-MR. MUROTA!
TMP
TMP
FU
M
P
A BONUS.


P-PLEASE SIT DOWN MR. MUROTA.

YOU SEE KYOKO?
MONEY POWER...
EVEN LOYAL DOGS LIKE THESE COME AROUND TO MY SIDE..

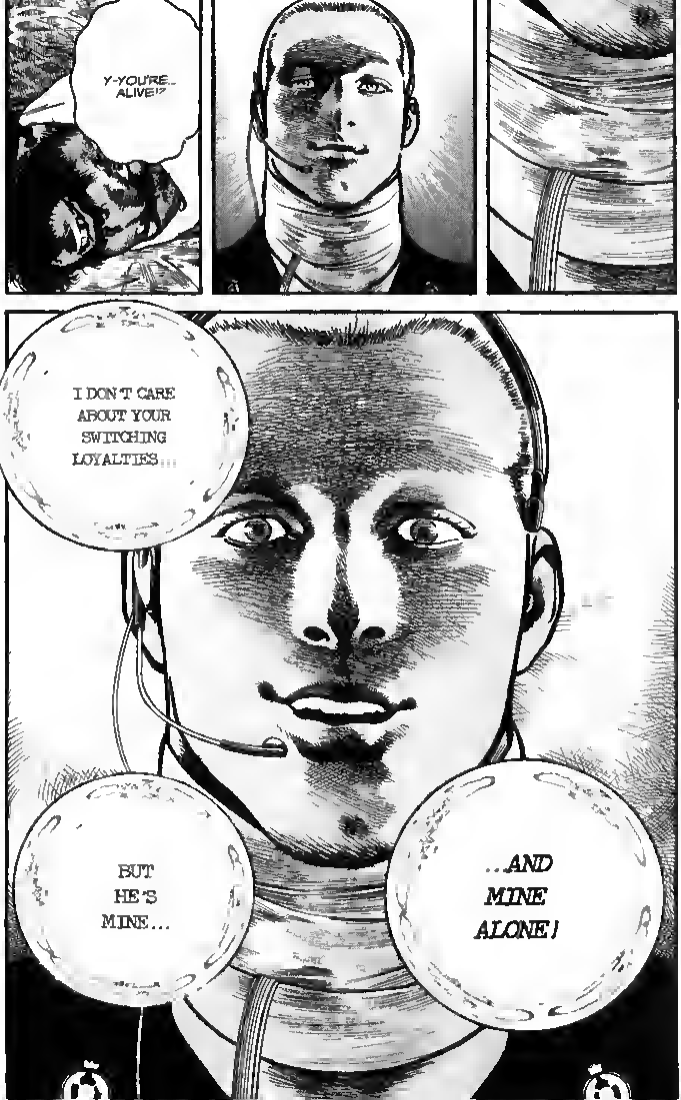
YOU DON'T WANNA BE MY ENEMY
...

HONNK
HONNK
WHAT THE HELL ARE WE DOIN HERE?
NO BUDDHA IS GONNA SAVE MY SCREWED UP SOUL...

I'VE COME THIS FAR. WHY AM I HESITATING?
HUH!?

K-KYOKO HOW DO YOU KNOW THOSE TWO!?

KRAK
SLAM


Y-YOU'RE... ALIVE!?
I DON'T CARE ABOUT YOUR SWITCHING LOYALTIES...
BUT HE'S MINE...
...AND MINE ALONE!

STRAIN
Jinchiseans
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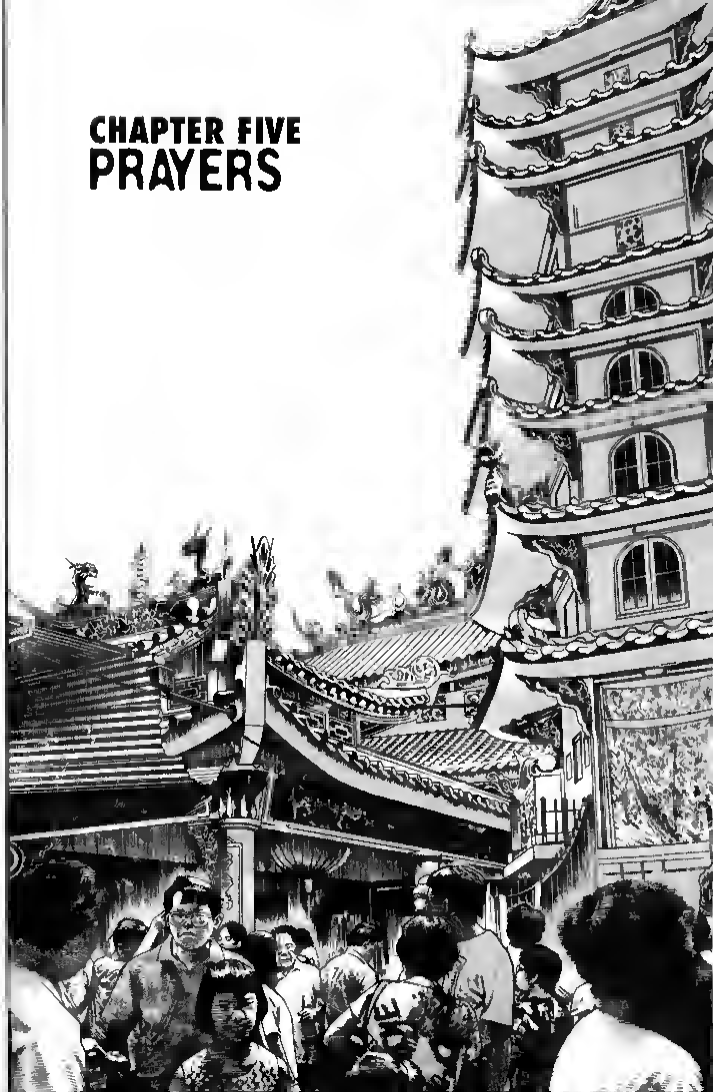
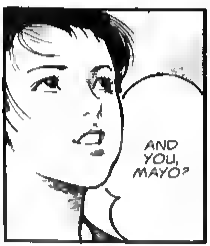
CHAPTER FIVE
PRAYERS



WHAT DID YOU PRAY FOR?

FOR YANG AND HIS WIFE TO GET WELL SOON

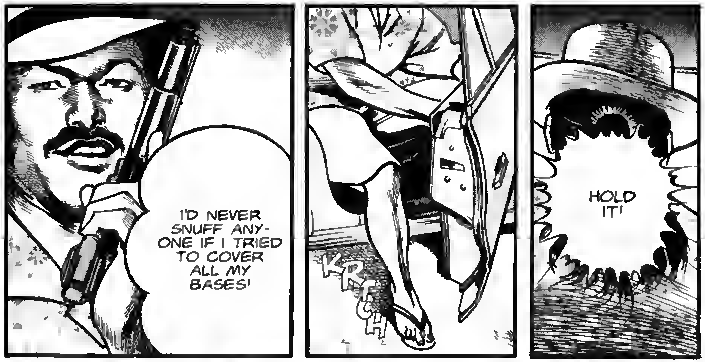
HMM..


AND YOU, MAYO?

I PRAYED FOR YOU TO INHERIT KUSAKA!

HOW THE HELL DIDJA KNOW WHO I WAS AFTER?
WELL, THANKS FOR THE HELP
Y YOU'RE NOT GONNA DO THEM HERE, ARE YOU?

IT'LL BE EASIER TO GET CLOSE TO 'EM IN A CROWD.
CHAK
BUT WHAT ABOUT ALL THESE PEOPLE?
HOW'LL YOU GET AWAY?


I'D NEVER SNUFF ANY-ONE IF I TRIED TO COVER ALL MY BASES!
KR-CH
HOLD IT!

EVEN IF I MISS, THEY'LL HEAR THE SHOTS.
THERE'LL BE A PANIC AND THEY'LL TAKE OFF
YOU THINK YOU CAN SHOOT ME!?
LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE SERIOUS, BABY

ALL RIGHT WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?
CHUD
PUT THIS CAR IN REVERSE! WE'RE HEADING BACK!
I ONLY BROUGHT YOU HERE TO BEGIN NEGOTIATIONS.
IF YOU AGREE TO MY TERMS, THEN I'LL TAKE YOU TO THEM ANYTIME YOU WANT
YOUR "TERMS" I?
THEY'LL BE FAVOR-ABLE
YOU'LL WANT IN
ASSUMING YOU'RE STILL THE YAKUZA YOU ONCE WERE!
...

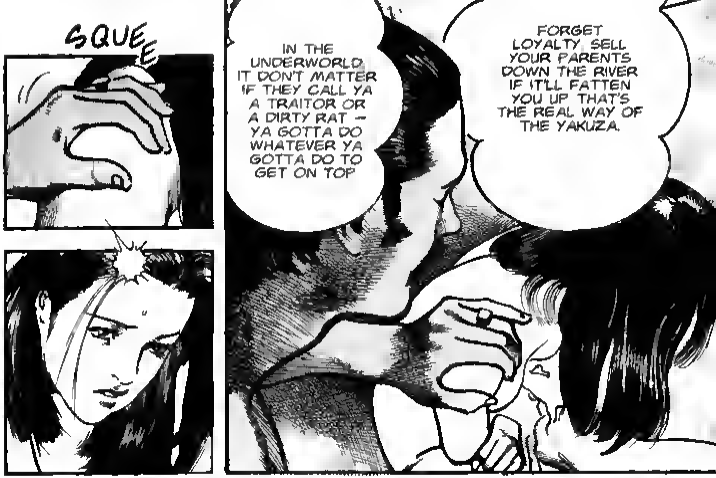
Shinjuku District, Tokyo, Twelve Years Ago
Koma
WHUMP
CHAK
WHO'S THE JAILBAIT?

TATSUO PICKED HER UP
A NICE FIND HUH?
SHE WAS WANDERIN' THE STREETS ..A RUNAWAY GOT NOWHERE TO GO..
SHE WALKED RIGHT INTO IT
GIVE ME TWO OR THREE DAYS AND SHE'LL BE WORKIN' FOR US.
THOK
YOU GODDA IDIOT
HUH ?
WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO WITH A NICE GIRL LIKE HER!?
CAN'T YOU TELL SHE'S WELL OFF? PROBABLY FROM SOME RICH FAMILY!

THIS AIN'T NO COUNTRY GAL HIGHTAILIN' IT FROM THE BOONDOCKS!
WE COULD GET INTO SOME SERIOUS TROUBLE HERE!
YOU FELLAS BEAT IT!
I'LL HANDLE THIS FROM HERE ON!
SLAMM
FWAP

W-WHAT ARE YOU-?
WHADDYA THINK? DON'T ASK STUPID QUESTIONS!
BSSHHA

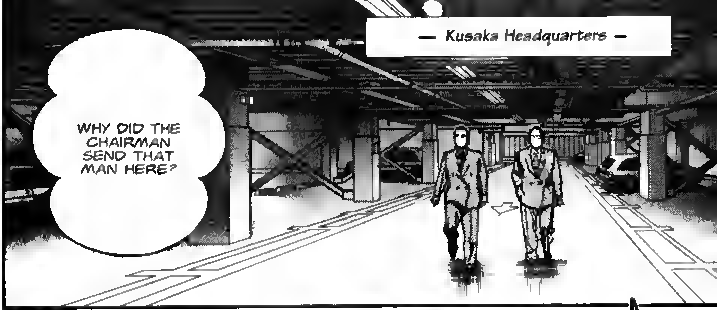
PFFAAH
YOUR FIRST TIME, HUH?
NO WONDER IT HURT
YA LEARN SOMETHING EVERY DAY THOUGH, HUH?
THE STRONG ONES LAUGH AND THE WEAK ONES CRY
THAT'S LIFE


SQUEE
IN THE UNDERWORLD IT DON'T MATTER IF THEY CALL YA A TRAITOR OR A DIRTY RAT — YA GOTTA DO WHATEVER YA GOTTA DO TO GET ON TOP
FORGET LOYALTY SELL YOUR PARENTS DOWN THE RIVER IF IT'LL FATTEN YOU UP THAT'S THE REAL WAY OF THE YAKUZA.

SEE WHAT YOU LEARNED?
BE STRONG!
MAKE ME STRONG!
MAKE ME STRONG SO I CAN STAND ON MY OWN!

H-HUH..?

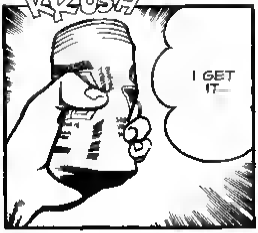
...ASSUMING YOU'RE STILL THE YAKUZA YOU ONCE WERE!


— Kusaka Headquarters —
WHY DID THE CHAIRMAN SEND THAT MAN HERE?

POISON IS SOMETIMES THE BEST ANTIDOTE

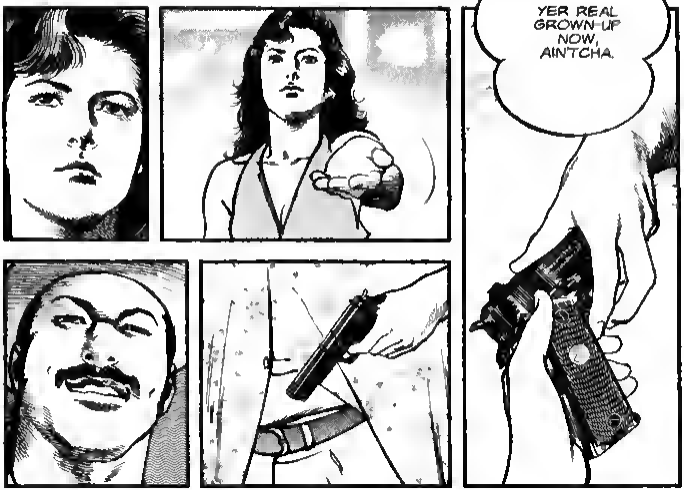
POISON'S ALWAYS POISON I WOULDN'T TRUST HIM AS FAR AS I COULD—

A-ANGEL! IT'S ANGEL, MR MURAI
Another poison.


KRUSH!
I GET IT—

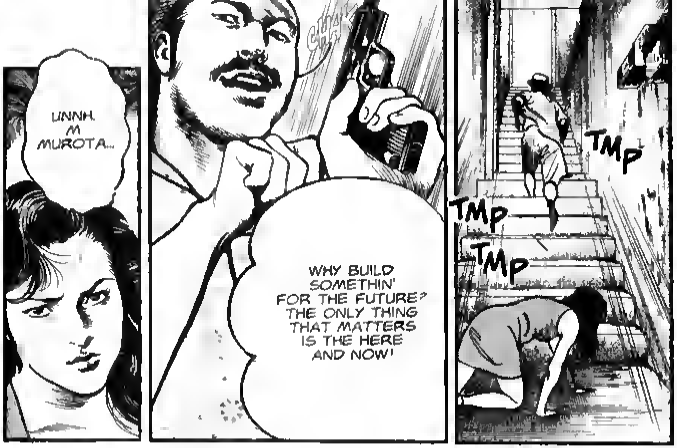
SO BASICALLY, YER ASKIN' ME TO BACK OFF...
YOU'LL GET A CUT TOO...
RIGHT NOW, YOU'RE JUST AN ERRAND BOY FOR KUSAKA.
IF YOU TEAM UP WITH ME, YOU'LL BE AT THE CENTER OF THINGS
KWOOP
APPEARS YOU'RE UNDER ESTIMATIN MY MAN SHUNICHIRO!
YOU COULD WHACK HIM!
WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE WHETHER YOU KILL SHINGO OR SHUNICHIRO...?
IT'S JUST A MATTER OF RUBBING ONE MAN OUT

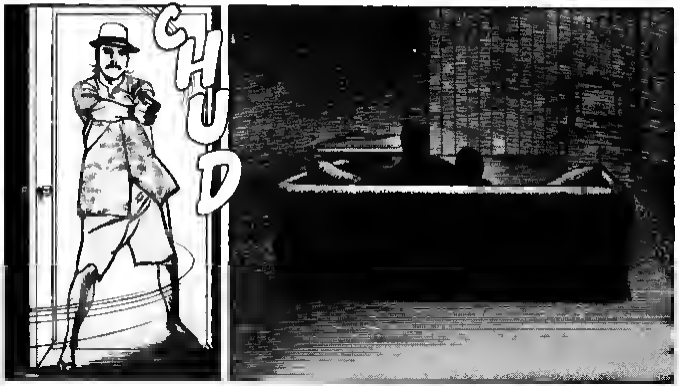
...
YOU'VE GOT A POINT THERE
SLAPP
ALL RIGHT THEN!
BAM
FIRST I WANNA MEET THIS SHINGO FELLA! THEN I'LL DECIDE!
W WHAT?
HEY, WE'RE TALKIN' 'BOUT MY FUTURE HERE!
WHAT IF THIS SHINGO GUY'S A TOTAL SCREW-UP!?

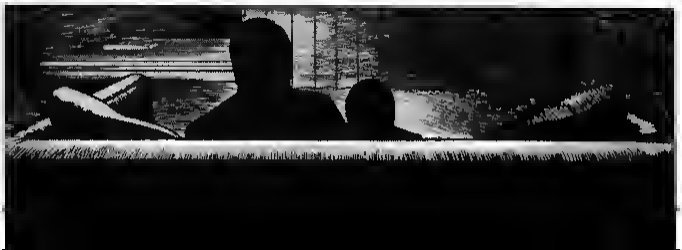

YER REAL GROWN-UP NOW, AIN'TCHA.

HERE, HUH?
NOD

WHU
MP
HUUU
HFF..
HFF..
ONE THING I FORGOT TO LEARN YA
YAKUZA DON'T LIKE TO SWEAT THINGS.
FWAP


UNNH.
M
MUROTA...
CHK
WHY BUILD SOMETHIN' FOR THE FUTURE? THE ONLY THING THAT MATTERS IS THE HERE AND NOW!
TMP
TMP
TMP


CHUD



BLAMM
BLAMM
BLAMM
BLAMM
BLAMM
PAFF
PAFF

CHAK
IMPRESSIVE
YOU'RE NOT NEW AT THIS GAME, ARE YA?

NO.
AND NOW
I'LL KILL YOU
WITHOUT A
FIVE DOLLAR
FEE.

STRAIN
Jinchiseans
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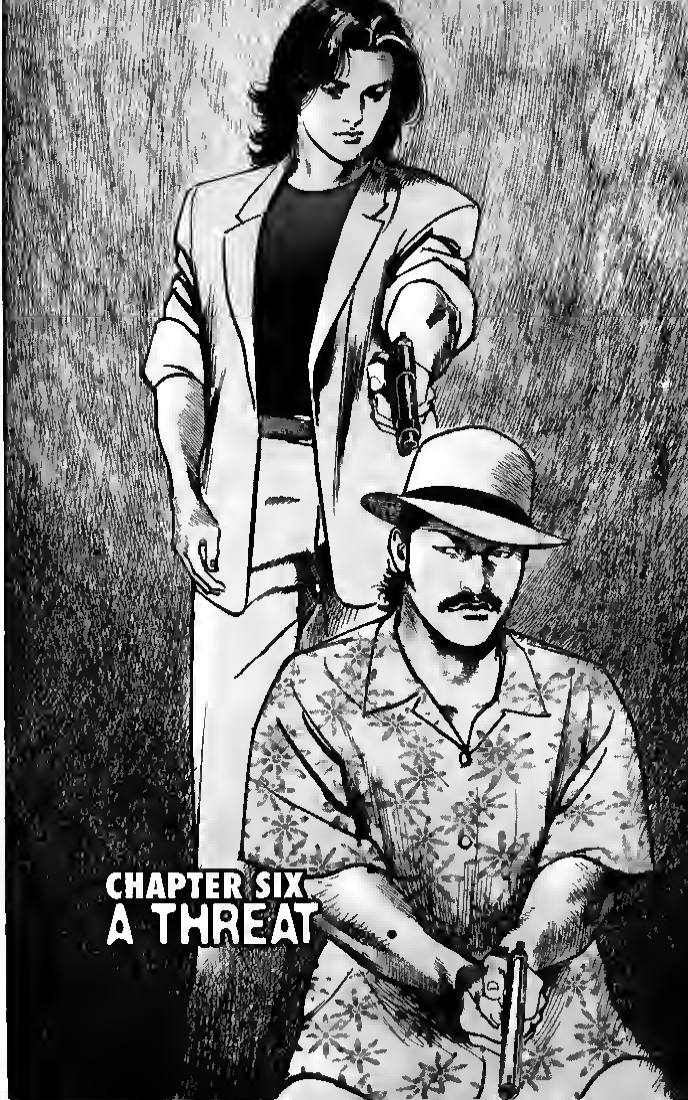
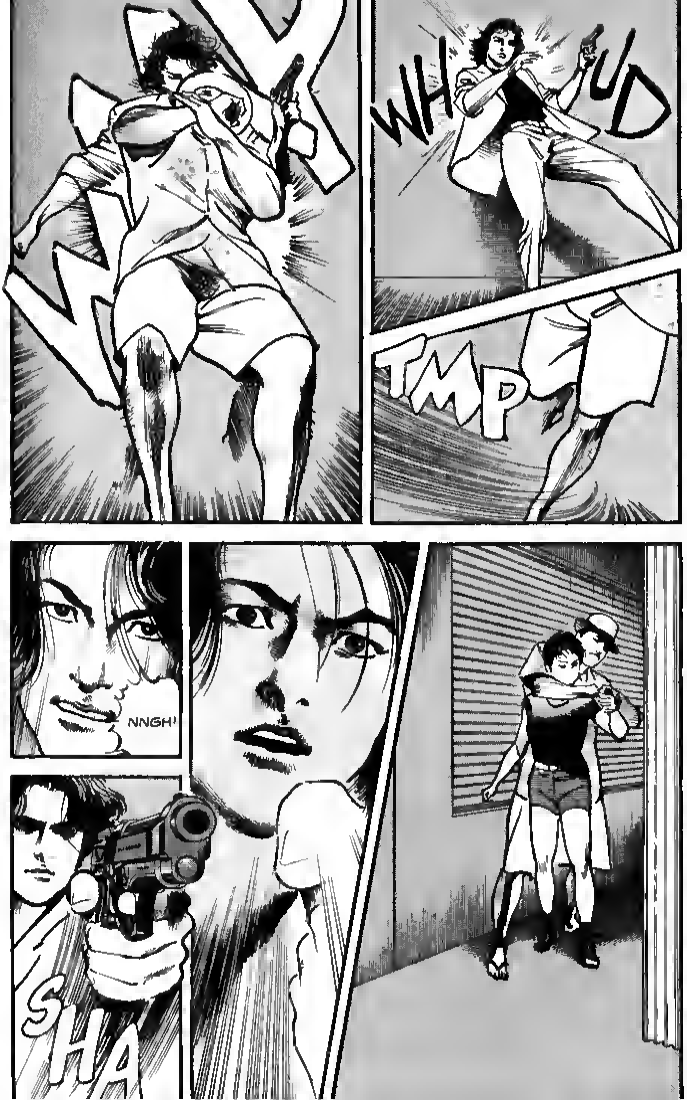

CHAPTER SIX
A THREAT

HEY! EVEN THE GIRL'S GOT A PIECE ON HER?
GUESS IT RUNS IN THE FAMILY
UNNH..
GRIP

WHADDYA SAY WE TAKE THIS SOMEPLACE ELSE?
SO HOW ABOUT A CHANGE OF VENUE, HUH?
YOU DON'T WANNA SEE MY BRAINS SPLATTERED ALL OVER THE WALL, DO YOU?

H-HEY...
CHH
HEY, C'MON! WHAT'S THE RUSH!
MAYO! THERE'S A CAR OUTSIDE...


WH
UD
TMP
NNGH
SHA

I ALWAYS LUCK OUT IN THE END...
M-MAYO.
...
WHAM
SHA

ARE YOU SURE IT WAS SUCH A GOOD IDEA TO TELL ANGEL WHERE MUROTA WENT?
DOESN'T MATTER WHO PULLS THE TRIGGER, AS LONG AS THE TARGET IS ELIMINATED
AND ANGEL'S A COP
IN THIS COUNTRY THAT MAKES HIM A GOD
He's alive...
So THIS is Angel...
I can take him easy.
VIPP

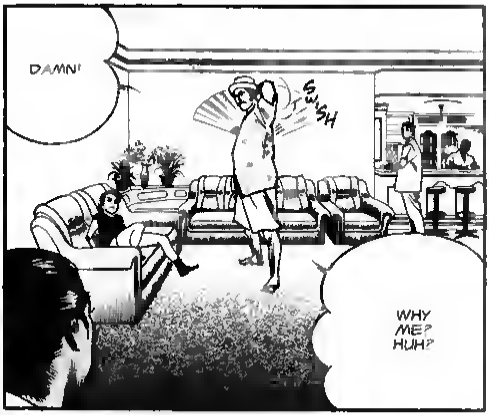
M-MAYO..
SHA
CHH
YOU SON OF A—
WOOSH

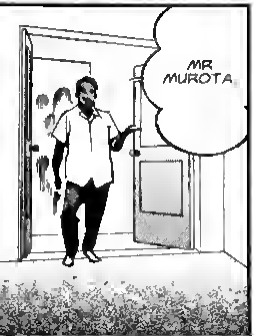
KRESHHH
BLAM
VIPP
WHUD

ARGH!
THAT A HOLE!
WHAT'S HE SHOOTIN' AT ME FOR!?
L-LEMME GO!
SH SHION
SHION
You know why I didn't shoot you Mayo?

Because I can't get hard anymore.
It won't respond yet.
So I'll let you live...
...until I get it back.

TUMP

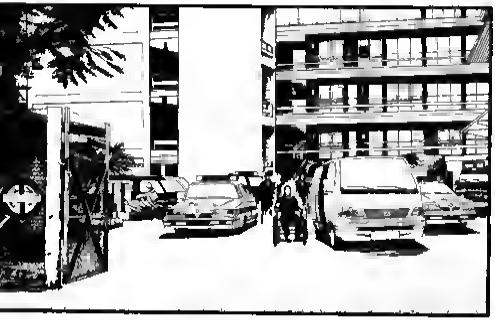

DAMN!
SWISH
WHY ME? HUH?


MR. MUROTA

K-KYOKO.
THIS LADY WAS TAILIN YOU, MR MUROTA
LET HER GO. SHE CAN'T HURT US HERE
KYOKO!
IMP
FMP
HUGG
SHION!
I'M SORRY. ME AND MY BIG IDEAS. I'M SORRY.
I'LL PROTECT YOU, I PROMISE. NOBODY'S GOING TO HURT YOU.

SO, KYOKO... YOU THINK YOU GOT SPECIAL PRIVILEGES JUST CAUSE WE USED TA HANG TOGETHER!?

REMEMBER, I AIN'T GOT A SHRED OF COMMON DECENCY



Mayo...
SHAAA
My men?
SHOOT ME IF YOU WANT..
BUT BEFORE YOU DO THAT, LOAN ME YOUR MEN!

COMFORT
MR MURAI! THERE'S A CHECK POINT UP AHEAD
SH' SHINGO..!
WHAT'S HE DOING WITH ANGEL!?

CHAK
CIGAR-ETTES?
...
FWAP
SHF
WHAT'S THIS, ANGEL?
FWIP
FOUND IT IN HIS POCKET...

TURNING
Now I get it...
Drugs...
W-WHAT is
SURELY YOU KNOW THAT DRUG POSSESSION IS A CAPITAL OFFENSE...
AHH!

HEH
HEH
HEH
That bastard. He's got 'em by the balls...
That's the same blackmail trick we cops use!
I'M ARRESTING YOU NOW MAYBE YOU'LL LEARN HOW TO KILL PEOPLE FOR FIVE DOLLARS
TUG
Hee hee hee I love it He's too much

BREEP
BREEP
MR MUROTA. FOR YOU.
!
!
SHION
D-DAD?

SO YOUVE MET SHINGO, EH?
UH. UH HUH.
LUCKY FOR YOU NOW YOU WON'T HAVE TO...
...DIE ALONE!

STRAIN
Jinchiseans
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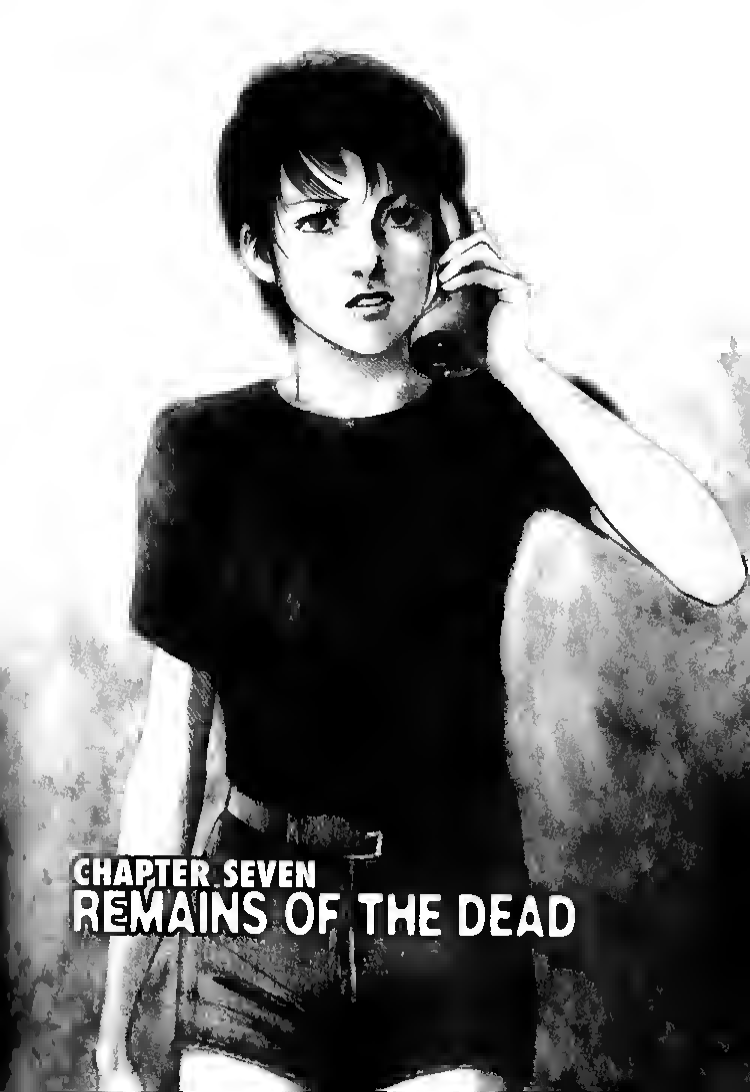
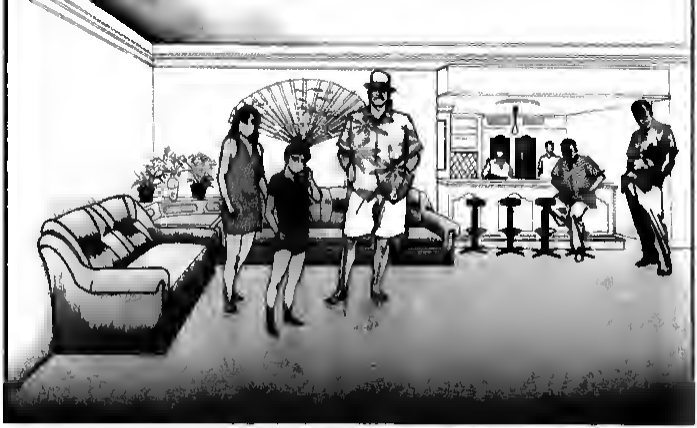
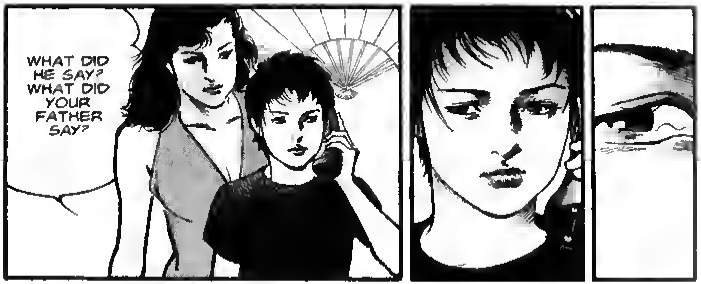
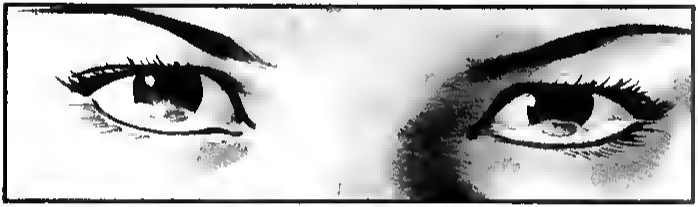
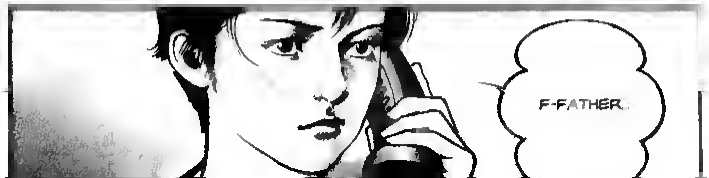


CHAPTER SEVEN
REMAINS OF THE DEAD




WHAT DID HE SAY? WHAT DID YOUR FATHER SAY?

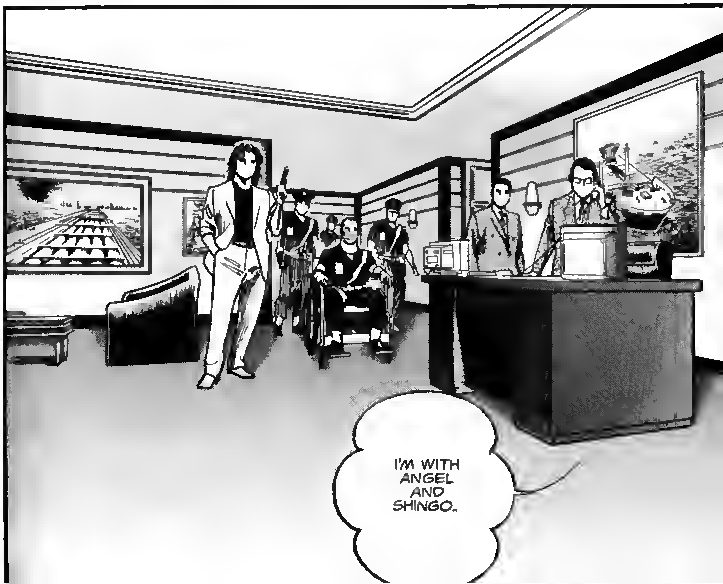



F-FATHER..

I'VE GOT A BULLET WAITING FOR YOU!

BIP
HEH
HEH
I WOULDN'T ERADICATE MY STRAIN IF I DIDN'T THINK IT WAS DANGEROUS

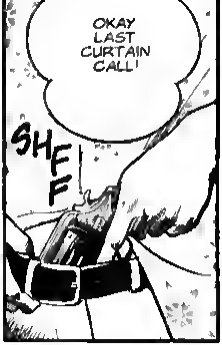
HEY! WHY'DJA HANG UP ON HIM!?
BREEP
SHUN?
HUH!? OH. WHADDYA WANT, MURAI?


I'M WITH ANGEL AND SHINGO.

BEFORE YOU BLEW INTO TOWN, WE HIRED ANGEL TO TAKE CARE OF SHINGO
YOU KNOW THAT, RIGHT?
YEAH.
ANGEL TOOK A SHOT AT YOU BECAUSE HE WANTED SHINGO ALL TO HIMSELF
ANGEL BROUGHT SHINGO HERE
BRING SHION.
WE DON'T CARE WHO ENDS THIS.
AND AS LONG AS HE GETS HIS FEE, ANGEL DOESN'T CARE, EITHER

LET'S WRAP THIS UP CHAIRMAN SHUNICHIRO'S WISHES MUST BE CARRIED OUT!
ALL RIGHT..
BIP
WELL?
GOOD WORK
See you later.

Gotta work on rehabilitating this sucker...
PAT
HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH


OKAY LAST CURTAIN CALL!
SHF F

YA KNOW, IF YOU AIN'T ON SHUNICHIRO'S SIDE, I'M GONNA HAVE TO WHACK YOU, TOO, KYOKO
SO WHAT'S IT GONNA BE?

FAT

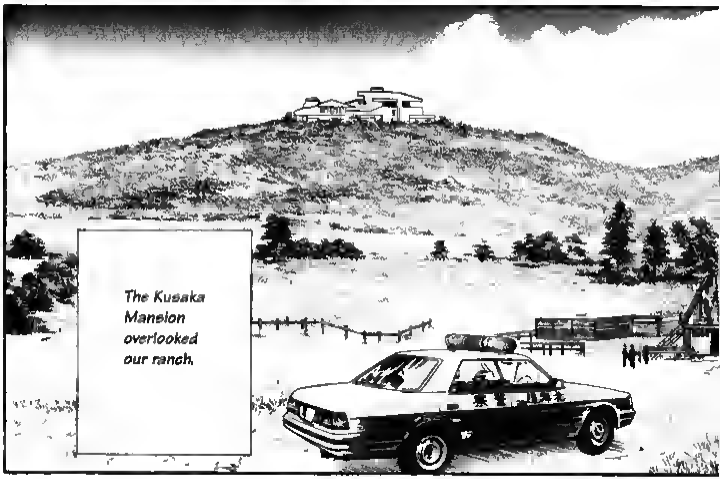
I DON'T GET IT

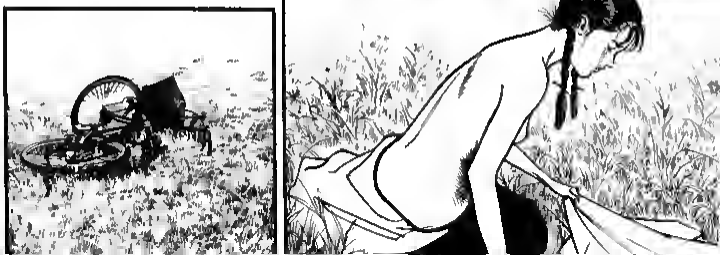
HOW COULD A YAKUZA LIKE YOU TURN INTO SUCH AN OBEDIENT PUPPY?
THAT'S NOT THE MUROTA I KNOW.

YOU WOULDN'T UNDER-STAND

IT'S BETWEEN ME AND HIM
I was fifteen when my old man croaked.
All he left behind was debts and an old run-down ranch.

I was always getting into trouble. A regular with the cops instead of my teachers.
CHAK


The Kusaka Mansion overlooked our ranch.



ZZZ-P
PTOO

KLOP
KLOP
KLOP
FWSSH

TA
TUMP

WHA—
IP
FWAP

KLOP
KLOP
KLOP
KLOP

...
SHUN WAS FROM A DIFFERENT CLASS AND I'M NOT TALKIN ABOUT HIS MONEY...
NEXT YEAR IN THE EARLY SPRING
...MY MA WENT HUNTIN' FOR KOMBU SEAWEED IN THE REEFS TO MAKE SOME EXTRA CASH. SHE GOT SWEPT AWAY BY THE WAVES
They found her body three days later, washed up on the beach.
SSHHHH
KAW
KAW
M-MA...

URGH!
BLARG!
M-MA...
TUP

SH
A
A

WHERE DO YOU LIVE?

I'M NOTHIN'.
..COMPARED TO HIM.
OIL, HUH..?
SHINGO
YOU, OF ALL PEOPLE, SHOULD KNOW HOW POWERFUL YOUR BROTHER IS.
YOU REALLY THINK YOU CAN WIN THIS?

ABSOLUTELY
AS LONG AS I'M THE ASSASSIN "MAYO"!
THE BULLET DOESN'T DISCRIMINATE BETWEEN TARGETS!
BRRR
FAP!

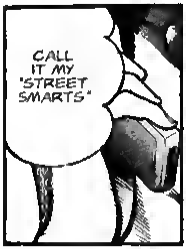
It's me – Murota! I'm downstairs with Shion. We're comin' up!
IT'S MUROTA. THEY'RE ON THEIR WAY.
GET BACK
JUMP
CHAK
SHA!

SLAMMM
D-DON'T SHOOT! WE'RE NOT MUROTA!

BLAMM

BLAMM
WHAT THE—!?
THUMP
YIPP

M-MUROTA
DAMN WINDOW SCREWED UP MY AIM...
KRISHNA! GIVE 'IM YER PHONE!
WHAT KIND OF AN IDIOT DO YA TAKE ME FOR!?
WHAT GAVE IT AWAY?


CALL IT MY "STREET SMARTS."

SOMETHIN' SMELLED BAD, SO I HAD A LITTLE TALK WITH KRISHNA. ANGEL TRASHED HIM.

He's there, right?

NOW WHY WOULD SOMEONE WITH A PERSONAL INTEREST IN YOU
...BRING YOU TO MURA! JUST TO COLLECT HIS FEE, HUH?

...

LISTEN UP, SHINGO...

THE GUYS WHO MAKE IT IN MY BUSINESS — THEY'RE NOT SO TOUGH.
WHEN THEIR LIVES ARE ON THE LINE, THEY GET THE RUNS.
I'LL LET THAT PERVERT TAKE CARE OF YOU.
YOU'RE FINISHED ONCE HE'S FIXED UP
ONCE I TAKE CARE OF SHION, IT'S ALL OVER
M-MUROTA!
W-WAIT! HOLD ON!
BIP

NOW I SEE WHY THE CHAIRMAN SENT THAT MAN HERE...
SPWAK

GOD DAMN, ITS HOT...
BETTER WRAP THIS UP BEFORE I GET RINGWORM.
SKRCH
SKRCH
GRAB
W WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING!?
JUST GOT A MESSAGE FROM MUROTA
I'VE GOT ORDERS TO SNUFF YOU BOTH..

ZING

Japan — Kusaka
I'VE MADE YOUR FLIGHT RESERVATION
GOOD
IT'LL BE ALL OVER BY THE TIME I GET THERE.
I'LL BE JUST IN TIME TO HUG THEIR CORPSES.

STRAIN

#Manga-SketchbookCDalnet

THUK

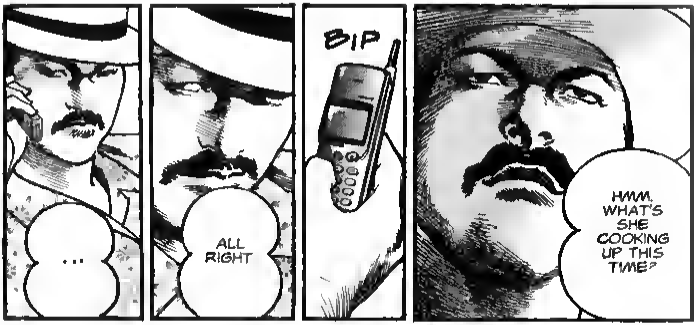
CHAPTER EIGHT
THE PUPPY

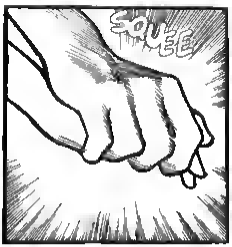
URGH!
WHERE IS SHION?
KRAK

CHAPTER EIGHT
THE PUPPY

GRIP
NOW THEN
LET ME TALK TO MUROTA!
YOU'RE GONNA KILL ME ANYWAY, SO WHY NOT LET ME TALK TO HIM FIRST!?
FAP

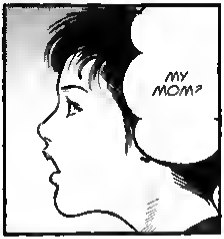
YEAH? WHAT?
YOU WANNA HAVE ONE MORE TASTE OF ME BEFORE YOU KICK HUH, KYOKO?
SWP
YOU GODDAMN LITTLE COWARD!
"COWARD"?
YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE THE GUTS TO SEE THIS THROUGH TO THE END!
YOU TOOK MY CHERRY! YOU OWE IT TO ME TO AT LEAST WATCH ME GET OFFED!
SHOW A LITTLE GODDAMN CONSIDERATION!


...
ALL RIGHT
BIP
HMM. WHAT'S SHE COOKING UP THIS TIME?


SQUEEZE

WHY DO YOU CARE ABOUT ME SO MUCH?

NEVER MIND TELL ME MORE ABOUT YOUR MOTHER...
WHAT WAS SHE LIKE?


MY MOM?

NOD

WAS SHE KIND? DID YOU LOVE HER?

SH-
SHION
I DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW COULD ANYONE NOT LOVE THEIR MOTHER!?
I IM SORRY STUPID QUESTION
YES. I LOVED HER I STILL LOVE HER

OF COURSE YOU DO OF COURSE
PAT

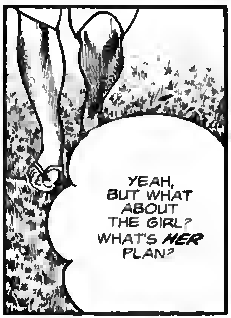
WHUMP
SO THEY'VE BEEN TAKEN AWAY...
MAYO!
I JUST HEARD THAT SHION AND KYOKO HAVE BEEN KIDNAPPED!
THEY SENT SOME YAKUZA FROM JAPAN. HIS NAME IS MUROTA...
I LET MY GUARD DOWN BECAUSE I THOUGHT ANGEL WAS DEAD
THEN YOU CALLED... I'M SO SORRY
WE'RE RUNNING OUT OF TIME...
I NEED YOUR CONNECTIONS, SAL...

ALL RIGHT THEN! ANY LAST WORDS?
CAN'T YOU JUST TELL THEM YOU FINISHED THE JOB?

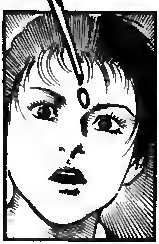
SHION AND I WILL LEAVE MALAYSIA, AND WE'LL NEVER COME NEAR JAPAN!
WE WON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH KUSAKA EVER AGAIN! HOW ABOUT IT!?

K-
KYOKO
AS LONG AS SHE STAYS AWAY FROM KUSAKA, IT DOESN'T MATTER IF SHE'S ALIVE OR DEAD, RIGHT?
I'LL RAISE HER AND I'LL KEEP HER ON A TIGHT REIN!
...
YOU SERIOUS?
NODD!

I WON'T LET HER DIE!


YEAH, BUT WHAT ABOUT THE GIRL? WHAT'S HER PLAN?

NOOP



SHF
SHA
CH'AK
CHAK
SH-SHION!
SEE...? YOU THINK THIS BRAT'S GONNA DO AS YOU SAY AND JUST KEEP A LOW PROFILE!?
P-PUT DOWN YOUR WEAPONS OR I'LL SHOOT HIM!

SORRY, KID, BUT IT AIN'T LOADED
HUH !?
SQUEE
KAK
WHACK 'EM!
MUROTA...

HOW CAN YOU KILL YOUR OWN DAUGHTER!?
WHAT THE—!?
I HAD YOUR BABY!
A CHILD AS OLD AS SHION!

K KYOKO?
IF SHE HAD LIVED SHE'D BE SHION'S AGE NOW!
...
Y-YOU'RE LYIN'... I DIDN'T SCREW YOU THAT MUCH.

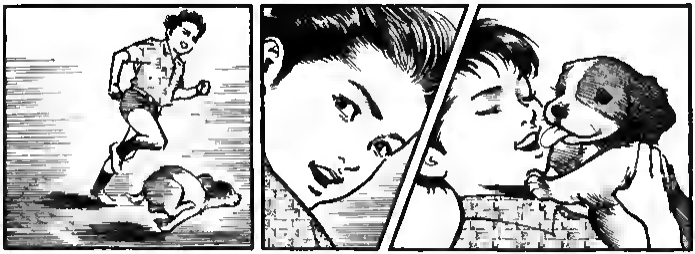
Narita Airport, Japan

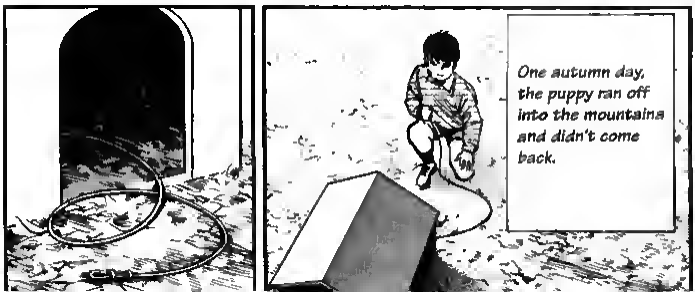
YOUR FLIGHT TO MALAYSIA IS ON SCHEDULE, SIR.

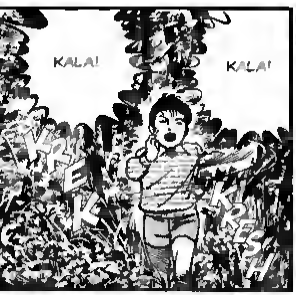
I HEAR HE WAS A TALENTED ARTIST...

EVERY-
ONE'S
GOT IT
ALL
WRONG

When he was around five or six, Shingo raised his own puppy.




One autumn day, the puppy ran off into the mountains and didn't come back.


KALA!
KALA!

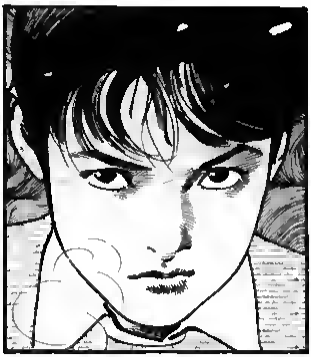
A deer poacher had set an illegal steel jaw trap

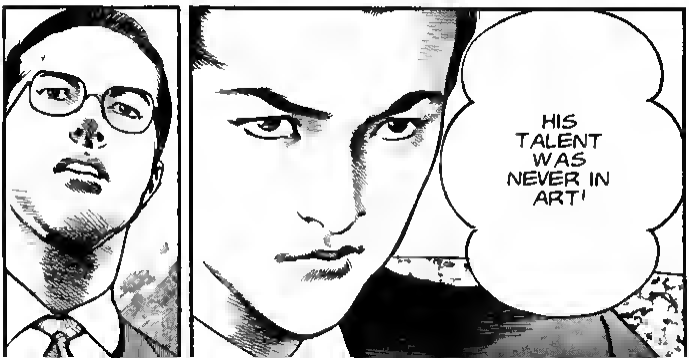
For two days, he didn't move an inch from that spot.

He drank and ate nothing. Just waited for the poacher to check his trap.

SHAA

TMP TMP
SNAK




HIS TALENT WAS NEVER IN ART!

To Be Continued

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

BURONSON

DATE OF BIRTH 1947
BIRTHPLACE Nagoya Japan

Buronson began his career as a comic writer after his discharge from the Japanese Air Force. His debut work, ***Pink Punch Mass***, was drawn by **Goro Sakai**. His first hit series was the bloody post-apocalyptic action-adventure ***Fist of the North Star*** (with **Tetsuo Hara**) followed by the detective story ***Doberman Detective*** (with **Shinji Hiramatsu**).

Writing under the name **Sho Fumimura**, Buronson's first collaboration with ***Strain*** artist **Ryoichi Ikegami** was the long-running political/crime thriller ***Sanctuary***. This sophisticated tale of political intrigue and the intense bond between two young men has proved to be a big hit in translation in Latin America as well as the United States.

Q & A

Q. What made you decide to become a professional comic book writer?

Buronson: When I was unemployed and broke. I started living with a friend who was a comic creator...

Q. If you hadn't become a comic writer, what profession would you have chosen?

Buronson: Gambler.

Q. What are your current interests & hobbies?

Buronson: Horse racing, making money and hair growth formulas.

Q. How would you describe the American comics industry?

Buronson: It's totally different from the Japanese comics industry. Japanese comics are unique and very different from American comics. I hope Japanese manga will be popular and take root in American soil.

Q. What message do you have for your American readers?

Buronson: Because there are subtle differences between Japanese and English, parts of my comics may be difficult to understand. I would like American readers to enjoy Japanese comics as "graphic stories," rather than thinking of them as the comics they are. Familiar with Japanese comic creators strive to make their work as entertaining as movies.

Sanctuary © 1997 Sho Fumimura/Ryoichi Ikegami/Shogakukan Inc./Viz Communications, Inc.

Fist of the North Star © 1983 Buronson/Tetsuo Hara/Shueisha Inc.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

RYOICHI IKEGAMI

DATE OF BIRTH 1944
BIRTHPLACE Fukui, Japan
BLOOD TYPE B
PROFESSIONAL DEBUT 1961

One would expect the world-famous artist of such realistic, gritty, and explicit titles as ***Crying Freeman*** and ***Sanctuary*** to be a tormented streetwise ladies man but when Ikegami appeared as **Viz Comics** honored guest at the **1995 San Diego Comic Con** he turned out to be a gentle unassuming man whose greatest preoccupation was picking out just the right gift to bring home to his wife.

In a panel with **Frank Miller** and other American comic luminaries, **Ikegami** confessed that his "dark side" only comes out when he tries to write manga. He claims this is why he is in far greater demand as an artist than a writer. When asked about his sexually explicit artwork, Ikegami laughed and called it a "fan service." The Comic Con honored his lifetime achievements with a coveted **Ink Pot Award**.

Ikegami's artistic career began inauspiciously when he was hired as a sign painter in Osaka after graduating from junior high school. But in 1961, he published his first manga short story in the graphic novel ***Makyo*** ("Magic Mirror"). In 1966, his story ***Sense of Guilt*** appeared in the famed underground manga magazine ***Garo***, where it attracted the attention of Tokyo artist **Shigeru Mizuki** (***Ge Ge Ge no Kitaro***, as well as other horror and children's monster comics) who offered him a job as an assistant artist.

In 1969 Ikegami drew the Japanese version of ***Spiderman*** recently translated into English by **Marvel Comics**. From 1974 to 1979, with writer **Tetsu Kariya**, Ikegami worked on his first major series ***Otoko Gumi*** ("Gallant Gang"), which was produced as a live-action movie in 1976.

Ikegami's most popular titles include ***Crying Freeman*** (with **Kazuo Koike**), ***Mai the Psychic Girl*** (**Kazuya Kudo**) ***Samurai Crusader*** (**Hiroi Dji**) and ***Sanctuary*** (**Sho Fumimura**)—all of which have been translated into English and several other languages—as well as ***Amen Boy*** (**Kazuo Kaike**) ***Otoko Ozora*** (**Tetsu Kariya**) and ***Offered*** (**Kazuo Koike**).

Q&A

Q. How did you become a professional comic book artist?
Ikegami: I've loved drawing since elementary school. It was then that I started to dream of being a manga artist.
Q. If you hadn't become a comic artist, what profession would you have chosen?
Ikegami: Cover illustrator.
Q. What are some of your recent comic influences?
Ikegami: Neal Adams' ***Superman*** and ***Batman: Lone Wolf and Cub***, ***Golgo 13*** (***The Professional***).
Q. What are three of your current interests and hobbies?
Ikegami: Eroticism, violance, and death.
Q. What are your plans for your next manga?
Ikegami: I'd like to draw something that illustrates the pain of existence.
Q. What are your favorite American Comics?
Ikegami: Work by **Neal Adams**, **Richard Corben**, and **Frank Miller**.
Q. Any comments on American, European, and other Asian comic industries?
Ikegami: Japanese comics are highly influenced by the directing, plot, story, and choreography of film and literature. But there are many comics that have transcended their roots in novels and movies. Comics are no longer in the realm of children's dreams; they've become an art form that can be enjoyed by adults as well. I'd like to see American comics progress in that same direction.
Q. What message do you have for your American readers?
Ikegami: I'd like American readers to use comics to develop an interest in Japan and the Japanese people.